

**TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
DECEMBER 9, 1998**

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Venis, Vice-Mayor Cox and Councilmembers Bush, Paul and Weiner. Also present were Town Administrator Rawls, Town Attorney Webber, and Town Clerk Reinfeld recording the meeting.

1. Discussion with The Mercer Group on Town Administrator Search

Jim Mercer advised that he wanted to get an idea of what kind of background, education, experience, skills, and abilities Council was looking for, along with what some of the issues were that the Town was facing.

Mayor Venis stated that in the past, the Town had required a Master's Degree in Public Administration which he felt that this would be preferable. He indicated that he thought extensive private industry experience would be quite helpful and added that a hands on type of administrator would be what he was seeking.

There was some discussion as to whether a Master's Degree should be required or just preferred. Vice-Mayor Cox stated that she felt years of experience could be counted, adding that she did not feel that the Master's Degree in Public Administration should be required. It was suggested that some sort of upper level degree in public administration or related field should be taken into consideration.

In terms of years of experience, Vice-Mayor Cox suggested that a minimum of five years of experience, the size of the city and the level of participation in the past should be considered.

Mayor Venis added that he wanted someone with good communication skills, who continually communicated with all department directors and Council, thereby keeping Council apprised in an updated fashion. He mentioned that he would be looking for longevity on the job, as well as being very familiar with areas such as planning, and dealing with unions in the police and fire departments. Mayor Venis commented that he thought the Town Administrator should be very sensitive to the needs of the residents, be willing to meet with residents and homeowner's associations, and be a people type of person. He further suggested that he would like to see the Town Administrator live in the community and be a very thorough type of person in terms of developing the agenda by having a complete package to put before Council.

Vice-Mayor Cox stated that she was interested in someone with knowledge in the economic development area, along with having the ability to balance that with a constituency who wanted everything to remain as rural as possible. She also indicated that she would be looking for some type of planning knowledge or experience and concurred with Mayor Venis in terms of finding someone capable of dealing with union negotiations. Vice-Mayor Cox mentioned that since the Town was in the process of launching an EMS system along with looking into a joint powers agreement, it would be helpful if the individual had experience in those areas. She also felt it was important that the Town Administrator understand the demographics of the community along with having some hands on knowledge of computer systems.

Councilmember Bush stated that he was interested in the candidate being independent, being able to make his/her own decisions for the good of the Town and being familiar with educational complexes.

Councilmember Paul indicated that she agreed with the other Councilmembers, but added that she would be looking for someone who was energetic, honest, trustworthy, ethical, someone who was above-board and who had good communication skills. She

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indicated that a business background would provide a great deal of knowledge with writing, reading and negotiating contracts. Councilmember Paul added that this individual would need to be able to deal with five different personalities and have the ability to represent, speak for, and advise Council, as well as have confidence in their own ability in terms of not being intimidated by outside interests or Councilmembers. She stated that it might be helpful for the individual to have mediation/conflict resolution skills.

Councilmember Weiner expressed his interest in the candidate having communication skills, but believed that listening skills were just as important. He stated that he was looking for an individual who was not afraid to lead as long as they were leading in the direction that was consistent with Council's direction. Developing and

maintaining a solid infrastructure in the Town was another concept brought up by Councilmember Weiner. He added that he felt an important quality was the ability to deal with all staff, from the highest to the lowest, treating them all with dignity and respect.

Mayor Venis added that having the ability to come into the Town and reassess the day to day operations as well as the structure of the departments and perhaps suggesting alternatives, would be another quality that would be desirable in a Town Administrator.

Vice-Mayor Cox asked Mr. Mercer if there was anything that Council had not mentioned that he felt it should be taken into account. Mr. Mercer said that he was interested in some of the issues that the Town was facing right now and summarized the issues as follows: EMS, utilities, growth/quality of life and planning. Councilmember Weiner pointed out that the Town was dealing with the issue of annexation of unincorporated areas and some familiarity with this situation would be helpful.

Mr. Webber discussed the application of the Sunshine Law with this process as he did not necessarily want to discourage individual communication between a Councilmember and Mr. Mercer. Mr. Mercer advised that he was aware of the Sunshine Law, but would welcome any additional comments or suggestions any Councilmember had at a later date.

Mr. Mercer requested a salary range which could be included in his advertisement for candidates. He indicated that Council could decide that now or wait until it had time to review the documents he would be providing them.

Council discussed the issue of salary and Mr. Rawls recommended that staff look at what would be competitive in the community. It was discussed that the range be \$90,000 to \$105,000 with a package of benefits to be decided at a later date. Councilmember Weiner suggested that the candidates be informed that Florida did not currently have any type of State income tax.

Mr. Mercer indicated that if there were any other individuals that Council wanted him to communicate with, he would be open to that. Councilmember Weiner suggested that Mr. Mercer meet with Mr. Webber in order to get an idea of what legal issues the Town might be facing. Mr. Mercer indicated that when he returned the profile to Council, he would have a prospective timeline for the various events that should occur.

There being no objections or further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.